

The Ohio Senate
Bill Harris, President



*The Ohio House
of Representatives*
Jon Husted, Speaker

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**LEGISLATIVE LEADERS ANNOUNCE PLANS
FOR ADDITIONAL BUDGET DOLLARS**

COLUMBUS – In light of new Office of Budget and Management (OBM) estimates that show additional revenues are available for the state budget, Ohio House Speaker Jon Husted (R- Kettering) and Ohio Senate President Bill Harris (R- Ashland) today outlined their plan for using those additional revenues, including addressing Local Government Fund cuts, investing in higher education, reducing the tax burden, providing additional revenues for school facilities and replenishing the state Budget Stabilization Fund.

Governor Taft this week again emphasized to both legislative leaders the importance of restoring funding to local governments, citing it as a top priority.

New revenue and caseload estimates, projected by the Ohio Office of Budget and Management, are expected to come in at approximately \$400 million per year for fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

Husted and Harris both agreed that top priorities for those dollars are investing in higher education initiatives to help grow Ohio's knowledge base, replenishing the state's Budget Stabilization Fund or "Rainy Day Fund" and reducing the proposed kilowatt hour tax change. This tax change will ensure more tax relief for Ohio's working families on top of the income tax cuts already passed by both chambers.

"This is another positive step as we transform and revitalize our economy, create new jobs and invest in Ohio's future. We must maintain fiscal discipline and I believe we have done so in this budget," Husted said. "New programs and new spending only tie the hands of future legislators. Through the actions we take now, we invest for today and save for tomorrow."

"The House and Senate both worked very hard to pass balanced state budgets, presenting responsible scenarios in which our state's bills could be paid and key programs funded, all the while making significant reforms in our tax code and Medicaid system for the future," Harris said. "Now that we know additional dollars are available, I believe the most responsible course of action is to send significant dollars to our rainy day fund to

protect the state's bond rating and provide a safety net for the future, but also to ensure tax relief for Ohio's working families."

Specifics for the additional funding include:

- **Protecting Local Governments and Libraries:**
 - Addressing cuts proposed to local governments across the state, including counties, cities and libraries.
- **Investing in Higher Education:**
 - Investing in efforts that will help grow Ohio's talent, invest in our economy and create jobs for the future.
- **Providing for Those in Need:**
 - Setting aside funds for the medical needs of Ohio's more vulnerable populations – the poor and elderly.
- **Tax Relief for Ohioans:**
 - Reducing the proposed kilowatt hour tax change – helping businesses and families across the state with utility costs.
- **Providing Dollars for Local School Buildings:**
 - Providing funds to the School Facilities Commission, helping the state to meet its long-term commitment to fund school building construction and renovation in school districts across Ohio.
- **Savings for the Future:**
 - Replenishing the Budget Stabilization Fund / Rainy Day Fund in order to save for the future.

The budget bill is currently pending in the newly-formed House and Senate conference committee. The committee – comprised of Senators John Carey, Ron Amstutz and Tom Roberts and Representatives Chuck Calvert, Tom Raga and Dale Miller – begins its work today.

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